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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 8737  
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RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 6963  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 9322  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 2466  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4251  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2412  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0241  
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SIPDIS

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CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS

11. LEAD STORIES: All Monday morning papers gave top play to Sunday's summit between President Bush and Prime Minister Fukuda ahead of the G8 summit.

12. "Sunset of U.S.-Japan Relations under Bush Presidency" The liberal Asahi editorialized (7/7): "U.S.-Japan relations under the Bush administration have been led by U.S. foreign policy.... While U.S.-Japan relations will remain important, the U.S. and Japan alone cannot resolve everything. Japan over the past seven and a half years has learned the limits of the bilateral alliance."

13. "Summit Helps Mend Bilateral Ties, But Issues Remain" The business-oriented Nikkei stated (7/7): "A strategic decision by the U.S. and Japan prompted the two leaders to play up bilateral unity at the summit. Any hint of awkwardness on the part of the two leaders would only have benefited North Korea.... It is a matter of course for the two leaders to reaffirm unity, and it was a prudent move diplomatically. However, trying to paper over the issues with moderate rhetoric will not lead to immediate solutions. The summit helped ease the awkwardness in bilateral relations to some extent, but it is questionable whether it was able to send a strong message urging North Korea to respond sincerely on the abduction issue."

14. "How to Cooperate on Abductions" The conservative Sankei argued in an editorial (7/7): "Despite the two leaders' praise of the enhanced bilateral alliance, signs of vulnerability in U.S.-Japan ties are abundant.... For one thing, the U.S. appears to be placing more emphasis on multilateral talks than on the U.S.-Japan alliance. The president referred to pressure

on North Korea by the members of the six-party talks. That idea, however, will not be effective, as China and Russia will distance themselves from such an approach. Another problem is that Japan is not making efforts to reinforce the alliance. Japan would not intercept a ballistic missile headed toward the U.S. because doing so would constitute collective defense. Given this, the U.S. will not trust Japan as a reliable partner."

15. "Push North Korea to Take Action on Nuclear and Abductions Fronts" The top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri editorialized (7/7): "Now is an important time for the U.S. and Japan to coordinate even more closely to ensure meaningful progress on the North Korean nuclear and abduction issues.... We must keep in mind that any schism between the U.S. and Japan would only benefit North Korea. It is significant that the leaders of the two nations reaffirmed bilateral coordination on the DPRK.... North Korea must not be allowed to buy time. It is important for the U.S. and Japan, in coordination with China and South Korea, to urge North Korea to act swiftly in future six-party talks."

16. "Follow up Words with Action to Resolve Abductions" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun asserted (7/7): "In a press conference following his summit with Prime Minister Fukuda, President Bush took up the abduction issue in his opening statement. He had expressed his sympathy toward the abductees and their families in previous summits. However, he appeared to be even more

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considerate toward them this time around.... Disarray in U.S.-Japan relations would not only have a negative impact on the bilateral alliance but would also benefit North Korea. The two leaders were able to successfully reconfirm coordination toward resolution of the nuclear and abduction issues."

SCHIEFFER